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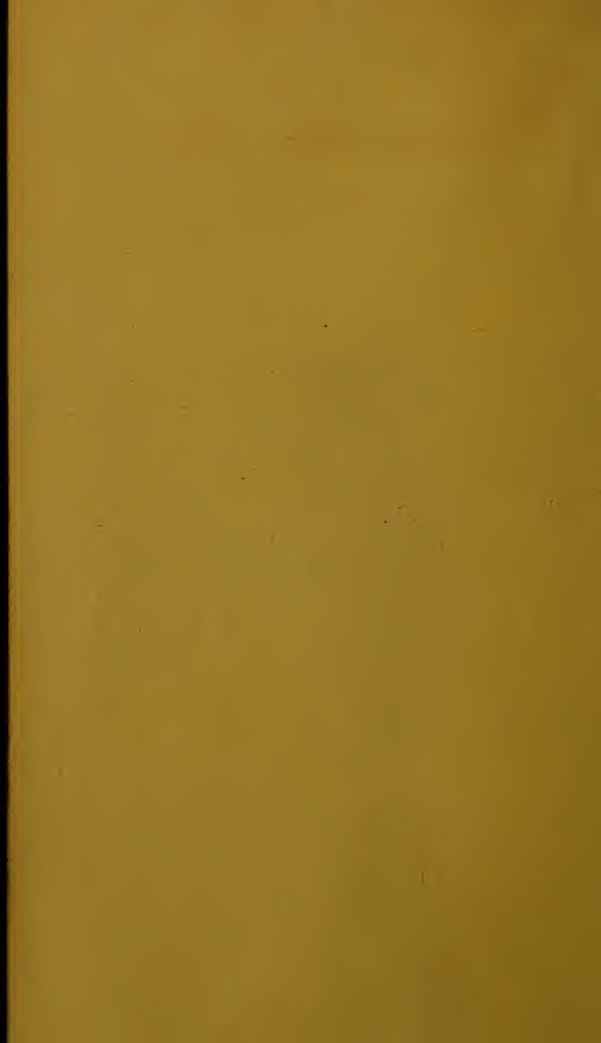
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PLAIN THOUGHTS
ABOUT
GREAT AND GOOD THINGS
FOR
LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY THE
REV. WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D. D.

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TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS.

I wish you health, because without it you cannot grow strong in body or mind, and so be useful in the world. I wish you joy, because it makes me sad to see a child sad. I wish you a new heart, because your old heart is naughty and bad. It will plague you as long as it rules you. It will ruin you, if you do not get rid of it. These are my three wishes about you. When I was a child I once thought that no one cared for my soul, and I wept. I was wrong, for many prayed for me. You may have the same thoughts. But you are wrong. The pious often pray for you. Some have written good books for you. I hope you read them. I send you this book in the hope that it will do you good.

We, who are old, will soon be dead, and you must take our places. I pray that you may do, and get more good than we have. It often makes us sad to see that we are not wiser and better. You must pray for yourselves. God can bless you. He alone can save you. Give him your hearts. Hate every false way and all vain thoughts. Look to Jesus. He is the best friend any of us have. He died for us. Love your Bible. Do as it tells you; and when you die, you shall go where good children, good men, good angels, and the good Jesus dwell. So I bid you GOOD-BYE.

PLAIN THOUGHTS.

WHAT A FOOL SAID.

DAVID often tells us what God said. This is always good. Now and then he tells us what he himself said. This is often, but not always good. He once said, "all men are liars." That is not true. Even David admits that he said it "in haste." We ought to think well before we speak at all. At least once he tells us what a fool said: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." None but a fool would say that. None can tell what a fool will say. It is his trade to think, and say, and do things which have no truth nor sense in them. It is always well to know *who* says and does things. Thieves will steal; rogues will cheat; liars will not tell the truth. He who brags will tell big stories of himself; and a fool will speak folly. Keep that in mind.

Some say that the word "fool," in this place, means a bad man. I think so too. He who has sense enough about other things, and yet speaks of God just like a fool, must be a bad man. Some men are so bad, that they talk and act as if they were stark mad. They hate all good men and good things. They spread nets for their own feet. They dig pits and fall into them. They love death. They would not be so foolish, if they were not so wicked. They do wrong, and then they think wrong. The more one sins, the less able is he to have right thoughts.

Such a man said, "there is no God." Where did he learn that? How could he know so much? If a man has not lived in every age, how does he know but that at some time there was proof that God is, and proof that would have shut his mouth? If he has not been in all places, the place he has not been in may make even fools say, there *is* a God. If he does not know all beings in all worlds, the one whom he does not know, may be a God. If he does not know all truth, the truth which he does not know, may be that there is a God. If he

does not know all causes, the cause which he does not know, may be a God. In short, one must know all things, must be in all places, must fill all worlds, must be a God himself, and thus shut out any other God, before he can know that there is no God. No man whose heart was not so bad as to make a fool of him, would dare to say, "there is no God."

Why should he say so? What good can it do to speak so much like a fool? No man will be made wise or good by such words. Men are bad enough now. If all men thought that there was no God, earth would soon be as bad as hell. We might sigh, and groan, and weep, and howl, but we would not pray. To whom should we pray? Now, we can call on God in the day of trouble, and he will hear us, and send us help. But if all said there was no God, none would pray. I would not pray, if I did not think there was a God. Would you? You would be a fool if you did; and what a world of woe this would be, if there was no prayer going up to God!

But there is a God. Yes, there is. No

man should doubt it. Even the heathen know that; they have very wrong ideas of him, and take very absurd ways to please him; but they know that he is. There is proof every where.

Did you see that steamboat? She ran fifteen miles in an hour. She made the water foam at her bow. Did she make herself? Does she move herself? Could she keep the channel, and turn the points of the bars, and run so safely, if there were no men to make the fires, work the engine, and steer her? You say, No. Very well, then; if that boat did not make herself, did the world make itself? If she does not move and steer herself, how can the world move and guide itself?

Have you seen the railroad cars? How fast they go! Some of them run sixty miles an hour. It almost makes one's hair stand on end to be near the track, when they pass at full speed. They make a great noise. Did you ever hear any one say, that no one made the road, or the cars? If you did, I know you set him down for a fool. You would not ride in the cars, if you did not

know that there was a man, who knew what he was about, standing by the engine to keep all right. But all your life you have been riding on a world, which is more than eight thousand miles through, and twenty-five thousand miles round. It has been moving more than sixty thousand miles every hour since it was made. Yet it makes no noise, but goes quietly on. Can you think that this great world can go so fast and so safely without some one to hold it up, and guide it? It hangs upon nothing. There are no rails laid down for it to run upon, yet it follows the same track every year, and turns quite around every day. It does not stop. It does not tire. There is no noise, because there is no jar. Could it move so, if there was no God?

If a man should say that the book which you hold in your hand, was made by chance; that no one wrote it, or printed it, or bound it, would you believe him? No. How then can any one believe that the heavens full of stars made themselves; or that the leaves, and birds, and beasts, and fishes, and flies, and flowers, all came by chance, and had no maker?

He cannot think so, unless he is the kind of man called by David a fool. Every thing in us, except our wicked hearts, and every thing around us, except fools, clearly say that there is a God. Even the fool is a proof that there is a God, who made him, and who is good to him. If God did not make him, who did? And if God were not very good, He would strike him dead, and send him to hell at once for saying such wicked words.

There are three ways of saying that "there is no God:"

1. Some say so *in words*. There are not many such. But I have seen two men, who said so. One of them died in the year 1848 in great fear. I do not wonder he was afraid. When God leaves a man in his sins, he will say any thing, and soon go to ruin. I never saw a *woman*, who said there was no God. I hope I never shall. I should not like to see a female so wicked. If you hear any one say, "there is no God," get away from him. He is vile. Yet do not hate him, but pity him, and pray for him; ask God to have mercy on him. You may be sure that he does not pray for himself.

2. Some say *in their hearts* that "there is no God." This is the way in which the fool said it. Such men *wish* there was no God. "The wish is father to the thought." Such love sin, and mean to live in sin. Yet they fear that God will punish them for sin; then they wish there was "no God" to deal with them. I have seen many such, I fear. They did not speak out their wishes; but they had them. Vain wishes! and they know them to be vain. If they do not know it now, they shall know it. God never dies; he never grows old; he lives for ever. They may wish on, but God will live on.

3. Others say *by their deeds* that "there is no God." That is, they live and act just as they would like to do, if there was "no God." They do not pray to him, except when they are full of fears. I knew a man to live fifty years, and he never asked a blessing at his table, nor prayed with his family. If such do not curse God, yet they do not praise him. Like the swine eating acorns under the oak tree, they are busy with what they find, but never look up to see where it comes from. They do not serve God, but they

serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. God is not in all their thoughts. They make all their plans as if they owed nothing to God. They do not love his word, even if they read it. They do not love God. They love gain, and gold, and fame, and fun, but they do not love God at all. They hate him. They do not keep his law. They do not repent of their sins against him. They have not as much that looks like a show of piety as the lost angels have; for “the devils *believe* that there is a God, and *tremble*.” But these men neither rejoice, nor tremble, when they think there is a God. Or, if they have some fears, they soon act as vilely as ever. There are many such. The world is full of them. Many of them know a great deal, but they do not know God. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge. Many of them have farms, and houses, and money; but they are poor. They are without hope, and without God in the world. Some of them are called great, and rise high; but they will soon sink to the lowest hell. Their state is fearful. Are you one of them? Would not you live very much as you do, if

you thought that there was no God? Do you love God?

THE MATCHLESS ONE.

THERE never was a gun, a ship, or a house so large that there might not have been others as large, or even larger. Each had its match, or might have had it somewhere. A man may be very strong, or wise, or good, yet some one may be found, who is as much so. But there is none like God. Good men are sometimes said to be like him, because, in their measure, they love the things which he loves, and hate the things which he hates. A candle is like the sun, thus far—they both give light. A dew-drop is like the ocean, in so far as they are both wet. Wind from a bellows is like a tempest; both of them are air in motion. Yet no one would gravely compare one of these small things with one of these great things, except in the low sense just stated. Neither can we liken any one to God. He has no match, no equal. Let us see.

1. He is the Creator; all others are creatures. There is no wider nor deeper gulf than that which lies between Him who made all, and all that was made. We all live, move, and have our being in God. He does not depend on us. We all depend on him. We cannot live without him. He lived millions of ages before men or angels were made. His name is, "I AM." Man's name is, "worm of the dust." God's life is like himself, without change, and without cause. He has life in himself.

2. God can do all things. He can make worlds and destroy them too. We can do neither. He can make something out of nothing. We cannot; angels cannot. He can make the earth reel and stagger like a drunken man. We cannot move it. He hangs the earth upon nothing. We cannot hang an apple or a feather upon nothing. He can change a bad man into a good man. All men and angels cannot do that. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" I know the pope and his priests, and some priests among the heathen, say they can forgive sins, but they can do no

such thing. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Peter did not pretend to forgive Simon Magus, but told him to pray to God for pardon.

3. God knows all things. No one else knows much. No man nor angel knows when the day of judgment will be. Jesus Christ said so. Yet God knows it, for he has *set* the day. No man, nor angel knows the mind of God in any matter, but as God teaches him. Yet God knows his own mind. No creature knows the human heart. But God searches it through and through. He knows our hearts better than we know each other's faces. We know what a man has said after he has spoken, but God knows what a man will say before he speaks. We know things by learning them; God knows things without learning them. He always knew all things. We forget many things; God never forgets any thing. To him nothing is new, nothing is old; to us almost every thing is new or old. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning."

4. God is good in himself. If any one else is good, it is because God has made and

kept him so. God is so holy that the heavens are not clean in his sight. No race of beings loved sin, when God made them. Yet "none is good, save one, that is God." None pities and shows mercy like God. He blesses like a God; he blots out so many sins of so many sinners in so free a way, that there is none like him. He never calls up an old sin that once has been buried. Peter thought that he was doing very well when he spoke of forgiving his brother seven times; and that is more than most men do. But God blots out sins that are like a thick cloud, and are more than the hairs of our head. "God is love." If he were not, we should all sink to hell without hope.

5. God is the judge of all. Men and angels, good and bad, will all be judged by him. But "he gives not an account of any of his affairs." We may not even try to tell what is in a man's heart, except from what he says and does. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." "Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." But God is of right the "Judge of all." He will judge "the

secrets of men." He ought to do it. He is the only one, who is fit to do it, or who can do it right. I am glad God is to be the judge. There will be no mistakes in the day of doom, for he shall be on the throne.

6. God is now and ever will be the source of all joy. He can make us happy in himself alone. If there were none but God and one man, that man might be full of joy in his Maker. God often makes men the *means*, but not the *fountain* of joy to each other. None can be happy, if God leaves him. Some great and good men think that all the pain of the lost will come to them from God's wholly leaving them. This may not be so. But surely if God goes away from a man, never to come back, and never to smile on him again, he is undone. The great bliss of the holy ones in heaven is, and always will be, that God is their portion. God can make us happy; but we cannot make him happy. He was as blessed before he had made us, as he is now, or ever will be.

7. God never changes; all his creatures change. Of our bodies, it is well said, "we all do fade as a leaf." Our minds change.

Our plans change. Every thing around us changes. Wicked men and devils grow worse and worse; holy men and angels are growing more and more wise, and holy, and happy. Their hearts are getting larger, and they can hold more bliss. The seasons change also. The very rocks are growing harder, or crumbling away. But God is the LORD. He changes not. God is far above us in all things. I cannot tell all now. Read and learn. If these things be so, then it is plain that,

1. We ought not to think of God as we do of any other; for there is none like him. To think that God is like man, is a great sin. He says so. Don't you do it. God is not man that he should lie, or repent, or be unjust. God is a pure spirit, and has no body. The gods of the heathen have eyes, but see not; our God has no eyes, yet he sees all things. Idols have ears, but they hear not; our God has no ears, but he hears the lowest whisper. They have hands, but they cannot make or do any thing; He has no hands, and yet He made and can do all things. They have feet, but cannot move; He has no feet,

yet he walks on the face of the sea, and on the wings of the wind. It is no sin to make a picture or statue of a man to remind us of him; but it is a great sin to make any image or likeness of God. He says so. See Exodus, 20th chapter 4th and 5th verses.

2. If God is such a being, then none should be loved and feared as he should be. We should love him with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our minds. We must love our neighbours as ourselves; but we must love God more than we love ourselves and our neighbours too. We must cheerfully do what our parents, teachers, and rulers command us, if it be lawful; but if they bid us do a wicked thing, we may not do it even to save our lives. He who thus saves his life, shall lose it.

3. If God be such a God, then he can save us from sin, and guilt, and wrath, and hell. He can make us joyful even in sorrow; He can wash us and cleanse us; He can keep us from falling; He can pay back to us all we give up for him. Others may laugh at us for praying, and singing hymns, and keeping the Sabbath; but such are poor sinful worms.

I know a little boy at school, who would not fight, but often read his Bible and prayed alone. The other boys laughed at him, and cried out, "Here is a little Christian." But that did not hurt him. He is now a good minister of Christ, and when he dies, Christ will reward him for not being led by shame to deny the Saviour.

4. Be not much afraid of any man, if you act right. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." All men are mere worms. The most they can do is to kill the body. But God can cast both soul and body into hell. "Fear him; yea, I say unto you, fear him." When John Knox died, a great man made a speech before they put the body in the grave. The speech was not long, but very good. This was the whole of it: "There lies he who never feared the face of man."

5. If false gods can neither see, nor hear, nor save, we ought to send the gospel to the heathen. I hope you pray for them. Would not you like to go and teach them? Think of it.

HOW TO LEARN MUCH.

YOU can learn some things at home, some at school, and some at church. If you wish to learn many things, you must read. I wish all boys and girls loved to read. A good book is a good thing. It is worth more than gold. The best book is the best thing you ever did see. It came from God. Holy men wrote it as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Bible is worth all the other books in the world. It is full of truth, and has no error in it. It gives great light. It shows the safe path through the world, and the safe way out of the world. It tells of the greatest things, and the wisest things, and the sweetest things. It tells us much about two other worlds besides this.

Were you ever at a school where the deaf and dumb are taught? If you were, you have seen them, with their smiling faces and bright eyes, standing at their black boards with chalk in their hands, ready to write. Some time since, a man went to such a school and saw a little deaf mute boy. He asked, "How

come this world to exist with all that is in it?" The boy wrote, "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth." The next question was, "Are all men good and holy?" The boy wrote, "We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." The man then asked, "How comes it to pass that we all die?" The boy wrote, "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The next question was, "How then can we be saved?" The boy wrote, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." The man then said, "Most other boys can hear and speak; how came you to be deaf and dumb?" The mute wrote, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." You say that boy knew much, and answered discreetly. So he did. But all his answers are found in the Bible. I have read many books written by great men in Greece and Rome, but I never learned as much from them about the creation, the fall of man, the cause of death, the way of life, and the right way to feel, and to speak of God, when he afflicts us, as

this little mute knew. There is no book like the Bible. It tells us so plainly of the greatest things.

You never saw as good a story as that of Joseph any where but in the Bible. And all parts of God's word give us the very light we need. A poor Hindoo was dying. He thought "where shall I go after death?" He asked his priest, who had come to see him, "What will become of me?" The priest said, "O you will live in some other body." "And where shall I go then?" said he. "Into another," said the priest. "And where then?" said the dying man. "Into another, and so on through many, many more," said the priest. The poor man looked beyond all these, and said, "Where shall I go last of all?" The priest could say no more, and the poor man died with none to tell him. The Bible tells us, that when a man dies his "soul returns to God, who gave it." It answers such great questions in the best way. I wonder men do not love it more. It is full of truth.

It tells us better than all other books how we should act. Many play the fool just because they will not read or heed what it says.

A man spends half his life in toil to get riches, and the other half in care to keep them. He is afraid lest he should lose all he has. Of what use is it to him? He cannot eat more or sleep better than the poor man. Nay, he cannot sleep as well. He is afraid of thieves. He fears changes. He fears every thing; but he does not fear God, and he loses his own soul. God once spoke to such a man and said, "Thou fool!" Why was he a fool? Because he did not know or care what the Bible says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." "Seek first the kingdom of God."

The word of God shows us how we ought to speak. The Bible says, "a fool will utter all his mind." If you see a man telling all he knows, you know now what to think of him. The Bible says, "Bless and curse not;" "Swear not at all;" "In many words there wanteth not sin;" "Keep thy tongue from guile, and thy lips from speaking lies." The rules which the Bible gives for ruling the tongue, are the best in the world. He who knows and keeps them, must lead a safe and

quiet life. The tongue is a wild beast. It must be held in, or it will do much harm. The word of God shows how this can best be done. Read it.

The Bible also shows us how we ought to think and feel. It goes to the heart. If that is right, all the rest will soon be right. That is the best book which teaches us the faults of our hearts and minds, and puts us right there. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. They show us our sins and our Saviour too. They make us see our guilt and the way to flee from the wrath to come. They point to Christ, and say that he is "the way, the truth, and the life." They tell us how he has saved many. They make us sure that he will save others. They say He is willing to save all that come to God by Him. They urge us to come to Christ. We never can be saved in any other way.

They show us how we may die in peace. A little girl in India was dying. She had

learned much truth from her Christian friends. Looking at a kind lady, who had taught her, she said, "I am dying, but I am not afraid to die; for Christ will call me up to heaven. He has taken away all my sins, and I wish to die now, that I may go and see him. I love Jesus more than I love any one else." She had hid God's word in her heart. The Holy Ghost had taught her what the word of God meant. Many a child, that had heard of Jesus, has been as happy in death as the little Hindoo girl was.

As the Bible came from God, it is full of goodness, wisdom and truth. It is above all price, and above all praise. How do you treat it? It may be that you would not like to tell. I can tell you how you ought to use it.

You ought to thank God for it, and you ought to prize it very highly. It is worth more than all precious stones. No man is wise or good but as the word of God makes him so. Never tear your Bible. Love it. Do not sell it, unless you can get another.

It would be well to get much of it by heart, so that you can say it when alone. I hope

you have so learned much of it. A wicked priest found a little boy with a Bible and burned it. The boy said: "I know all Christ's sermon on the mount by heart, and you cannot burn that."

You should read the Bible much. Some have good Bibles, but they keep them out of sight, and do not often look into them. That is a poor way. The Bible will do you no good, unless you know what it teaches. It must be studied. Read it often, and with care.

Pray to God to teach you the true sense of that blessed book. David was a great man. Yet how often does he pray, "Teach me thy statutes." "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." God can teach his word so as no man can. Ask him to guide you.

Receive the Bible not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God. Never dispute against the truth of God. Let your heart open and take firm hold of all the truth you learn. He who does not love the truth, cannot be saved.

Live by the truth. Let your hopes and

fears, your joys and sorrows, your heart and life, your mind and tongue, be ruled by the Bible. Its truths are for use, and not merely for talk. Do as it directs.

Will you not now resolve thus?

1. I will keep my Bible near me and take good care of it.

2. I will read some of it every night and morning.

3. I will pray God to fix its truths in my heart.

4. I will try to shun all that the Bible forbids.

5. I will try to do all that the Bible requires.

6. I will never make fun of any part of the Bible.

7. I will ask questions of those who can teach me what the Bible means.

8. I will try to come to Christ, as the Bible says I must. I need just such a Saviour as Jesus is. O that I may find him, or rather be found of him, and be found in him.

ANGELS AND MEN.

So far as we know, there are but two races of beings who can know and love God. These are angels and men. I will tell you some things about them. But I cannot tell you all that I might, if you were older. Yet I do not know much myself. All that any one knows of the angels, and most that any one knows of men, is learned from the Bible. But I can tell you some things.

I. We do not *know* when God made any of the angels. He made them all before he made man, but how long before, no man on earth knows. Nor do we know whether God made all the angels at once. Some think he did, and he may have done so, but no man can prove it. Nor do we know whether at the last day there will be more angels than men, or more men than angels, or whether there will be as many of one race as of the other. The word of God does not settle any of these points, except that angels were made before men.

II. In some points angels and men are not

alike. Angels are not *born*. They were all made without being born. "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage." They are not male and female. Angels have but one nature. They are spirits without bodies. Ever since the first man, the human race is *born*, is male and female, and all men have two natures. One is the body; the other is the soul. Men grow old and weak. But angels do not. When Christ rose from the dead, an angel was seen in the tomb, and although we know that he was then more than four thousand years old, yet he looked like a "young man." There have been some great men. But the least angel is greater than any mere man. All of them "excel in strength." As long as man lives in the body, he stays all the time in one world. But angels pass from one world to another all the time. Jacob saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending. That ladder has never been taken away. Men never help the angels, but the angels often help men. One of them came and strengthened Christ in his agony. "Are they not all ministering

spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" This is spoken of all the good angels.

III. But we know that angels and men are by nature alike in some things. They are all creatures. God made them every one. There was a time when there was not one of them. They all depend on God. They cannot live except as He holds them up. God also made them holy, just, pure, and true. He made man upright. He made the angels upright. God also made them all to have life for ever. They will all outlive the sun. They will live as long as God shall live. They will live because he will keep them in life. When God made the angels he put them all on trial. And when he made man, he put him on trial too. But he did not try them alike. He tried every angel by himself. If he stood, he stood for none but himself. If he fell, he fell for himself alone. But Adam acted both for himself and for all mere men who should ever be born. If he stood, they should stand. If he fell, they should fall. We do not know how long either angels or men were kept on trial; but

we do know that many angels fell. How many, no man can tell. It may have been a third. It may have been more. It may have been less. But legions of them fell. And Adam fell, and with him we all fell too. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." "Through the offence of one, many be dead." "By one man's offence, death reigned by one." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." "In Adam all die." The same law was given to angels and men. It called for perfect love. All were bound to obey it with all the heart. But some angels did not keep the law. Neither did man. They fell into sin, and thus they fell under the curse of God, and became children of wrath. As soon as angels sinned, God drove them out of heaven. As soon as man sinned, God drove him out of Eden. Nor did he ever let either of them return to their first home. Sin in an angel, and sin in a man is the same thing. It consists in not being holy and pure, as the law of God requires.

IV. But God did not treat sinning man and sinning angels in the same way. If you ask, why? I cannot tell. It was not because God could not have saved lost angels, if he had chosen to do so. If Christ had, by the will of God, taken on him the nature of angels, he might have been their Saviour. But he did not. Such was not God's plan. Nor did God offer mercy to lost man, because he was better than lost angels. The angels were older and by nature higher and greater than man. It is a strange fact that the load-stone will not attract gold and silver, which are precious metals: but it will attract iron, which is a base metal. So the love of God did not turn to those high fallen beings; but it turned to man, who is the lowest and the last creature that has reason, and that shall live for ever. God did not owe man any mercy. The sentence of death on him was as just as on the angels that fell. If any still ask, Why did God pity wicked man and not sinning angels? or, Why did he not destroy both? or, Why did he not save both? I can only say: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." God

had reasons. He has good reasons for all he does. But he has not told us what his reasons in this case were. I do not know that we ever shall know them. To guess at them is wicked. "Secret things belong unto the Lord, our God; but things which are revealed belong unto us, and unto our children." This matter is not revealed, and so does not belong to us.

V. But what love did God show to sinful man, that he did not show to sinful angels? Much every way. The first time God spoke to man after his sin, he freely promised a Saviour to him. But he never gave to sinning angels any reason to hope for a Saviour. Indeed he never has spoken one word of love to them since they fell. But he has spoken many precious things to poor sinful men. The Bible is full of them. Nor did God ever fail to keep his word. In due time the Father sent his Son to die for men. He bore *our* sins. He carried *our* sorrows. He died for *us*. He died not for the angels. He died in *our* place. To fallen men, not to fallen angels, is the Spirit of God sent to give them new hearts. No gospel is preached

in hell. There are no means of grace there. There is one thing I never could see into. It is this. How can men be so wicked as to hate Jesus Christ, and not come to him for life, after he has *died* for them? I know well enough why fallen angels are not saved. There is no mercy for them. God offers them none. But I know men, who have heard the pure gospel for forty years, and yet they do not love Christ. Sin must be very strong, and the heart very hard, and the will very proud, when men will not love the Lord Jesus. Such will at last lie down in "hell-fire prepared for the devil and his angels." It is strange that men will seek to go to the prison built for devils.

VI. But holy angels and holy men will all meet at last. Christ is the Lord of angels, though he is not their Redeemer. He is both the Lord and Redeemer of the saints. Thomas said to him: "My Lord, and my God." Christ is the Head of all holy angels and men. He is their Chief. He is their Captain. All of them love and worship him. He binds them all fast in one household. There is but "one family" of holy creatures;

and Christ is Lord of all. Angels love the saints even here. Angels and all the saints who have left this world, have their home together. They live by the river of the water of life. They eat of the fruit of the tree of life. They sing praises to God and the Lamb day and night. The world they live in is called heaven. It is the first and the best world ever made. It is a blessed place. If we die in faith, and hope, and love, we shall go there. All who are there are full of love. ONE outshines all the rest. It is Jesus with the scars upon him. He wears a crown of thorns no more. He is brighter than the sun. He welcomes all his people to his house. How happy they must be! There is no pride, nor anger, nor any sin, nor sickness, nor death there; no thief, nor liar, nor any wicked person enters there. All sing the same song at times. But sinners saved by grace sing "unto him that loved *us*, and washed *us* from our sins." The angels cannot sing that, but they love to hear it. How I should love to hear those songs. Would not you? The babes, and children, and old saints, who have been

washed in the blood of Jesus, all sing. None are silent. We ought to learn to sing of Jesus here, that we may sing of him as soon as we die. Every one who is, by divine grace, made fit for heaven, will go there as soon as he dies.

WHO RULES THE WORLD?

FOR any thing I see there might as well be no God, as a God who should not know, and see, and care, how things go on in the world. The idols of the heathen are of that sort, and they are nothing. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?" Our God never slumbers, nor sleeps, nor goes on a journey. He is ever awake, and his ear is open to the cry of his people. He never grows weary. He is never sick. He fainteth not. His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He is not like "the ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the earth,

and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them." But He is like the hen, that gathereth her chickens under her wings, and keeps them dry, and warm, and safe. The Lord God is a sun and a shield. He rules this world. He rules all things and all worlds. The Bible says so: "His kingdom ruleth over all."

He rules each thing. He numbers the very hairs of our heads. He takes care of little insects, and fishes, and birds. "Not a sparrow falleth without his notice." He calls all the stars by their names, and there are known to be more than five hundred millions of them. He spreads the clouds in the heaven. He is the father of the rain. He makes the grass to grow upon the mountains. "He clothes the grass." He gives food to the beast and to the young ravens. He gives snow like wool. He scatters the hoar-frost like ashes. Who can stand before his cold? He hunts the prey for the lion. He sends out the wild ass free. He gives the goodly plumage to the peacocks. He gives to the horse his strength, and clothes his

neck with thunder. He shuts up the sea with doors, so that it breaks not forth. He enters into the springs of the sea. He knows the place and the bounds of light and of darkness. He gives rain and fruitful seasons, and fills men's hearts with food and gladness. Angels, men, sun, moon, stars, the heavens, the waters above us, the waters beneath us, dragons, fire, hail, snow, vapour, stormy winds, mountains, hills, trees, beasts, cattle, creeping things, flying fowl, kings, all people, young men and maidens, old men and children, lightning and earthquakes, war and peace, disease and death, and heaven and hell, are all ruled by God. He never lets any thing go out of his reach, or beyond his grasp. He holds the wind in his fist. So that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the prudent, nor favour to men of skill; but God lifts up and puts down whom he will. He causes men to rise or fall, to be rich or poor, to be strong or weak, to gain or lose. The side God is on always succeeds, always conquers. So that a horse is a vain thing for safety, and a host is no

defence, and God has no pleasure in the legs of a man.

God rules even chance. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." To us there is much chance. "Time and chance happeneth to all men." But to God there is no chance. All falls out by a wise plan. When God had made up his mind to take wicked Ahab out of the world, he did not send any one to take aim at him; but "a man drew a bow at a venture, and smote him between the joints of the harness," and he died. God can save one's life, even if men do shoot at him. An Indian shot seventeen times at Washington in Braddock's defeat, but he did not hurt him. The Indian said the Great Spirit would not let that man be hit. When David was old, he said, "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."

Cyrus was king of Persia and took Babylon. Long before he was born, God thus wrote to him by name: "I am the Lord, there is no God besides me. I girded thee though thou hast not known me. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace

and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." Isa. xlv. 5, 7. "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it? Amos, iii. 6. Even devils are subject unto God. Death is his servant. He holds the keys of death and of hell. He opens and none can shut. He shuts and none can open. "Behold, God is great."

He rules all men, great and small, good and bad. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord." Prov. xxi. 1. He turns it, just as a man turns the little streams of water brought into his garden to water it. This is often done in Asia. A man makes the water run any way he pleases. Just so God turns the king's heart. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps." "Man's goings are of the Lord, how can a man then understand his own way?" So that good Jeremiah said: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps." If a man hate and vex us, it is because God lets him loose upon us; for "when a man's ways please the Lord, he

maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. xvi. 7. When God planted the Jews in Canaan, he told them that all, who were able, must go up to the holy city three times every year to worship him. They had wicked foes all around them. These often made war on them. But God said: "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." Ex. xxxiv. 24. God can cause the wicked not to wish us any harm, and yet they may be free agents. So God led Absalom and all his men to choose foolish rather than wise counsel. 2 Sam. xvii. 14. When God will, "he turns the wise men backward." Isa. xliv. 25. God uses the wicked as a man uses a sword, a rod, an axe, or a saw. Ps. xvii. 10, Isa. x. 15. He makes bad men punish themselves. Ps. ix. 15, 16. He lets them punish each other. Isa. x. 5, 6, 7, 12. "He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." He let bad men and Satan combine to put Christ to death. But life, and joy, and hope spring from that death. The death of Christ was

the most dreadful blow God ever gave to Satan's power.

God rules the world in a way that is holy, wise, just, and good. His way is always better than ours. His way is perfect. We cannot help him rule the world. God never errs, never does wrong. He makes no mistakes.

And he *alone* rules. The devil is not the owner of this world. He is "the ruler of the darkness of this world," that is, he leads men who are in darkness, and who love sin; but he cannot lead them further than God permits. Satan himself is bound with a chain. He could not touch a hair of Job's head till God gave him leave. Chance is not the ruler of this world. Chance is blind, and knows nothing, and is nothing. God alone rules the world. He is all, and in all, and through all, and over all.

If these things be so, then we ought to believe them, and hold them fast. Let us never doubt that God reigns. This is a great truth. To know it will guide and help us much.

But we must not try to be wise in this

matter, but by taking God's word as true, and by seeing what he does. We must not try to reason out every thing. We will get lost if we do. Those who cannot swim must not go into deep water. God's ruling the world is a deep matter. His path is in the sea. His ways are past finding out. He says, "Be still and know that I am God."

It is a great comfort that God rules the world. I am glad of that. Are not you? If we are sick, or sad, or poor, or lose our friends, it is God who afflicts us. He says: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Luther said, "Smite, Lord, if thou lovest me." We need not fear any man if God rules. Those three good young men said: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods." That was a good answer. God kept them safe. The fire did not burn them. The Son of God was with them. If you

have time, you would do well to read the third chapter of Daniel.

Let us put our souls, our lives, and all we care for, in the hands of God. Let us leave all with him. He brings light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and good out of evil. He is too strong for all his foes to stand up against him. He is too wise to let bad men defeat his plans. He is too good to be unkind. He is as tender as a shepherd, a father, a nurse, a mother. He spreads his wings over us by day and by night. He gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let us praise him for the past. Let us trust him for the time to come. He has done all things well. He will do all things well. He will guide us, and teach us, and hold us up, and keep us as the apple of his eye, if we but trust in him. The best thing we can do is to fear, love, obey, and trust in him.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

A lady once looked into a book and saw a word which made her much afraid. She

could not sleep that night: she tossed and groaned. She was a gay woman. She loved life. She loved this world. She did not wish to leave this world. The word she saw in the book was "ETERNITY." It is a solemn word. I do not wonder that it fills the minds of sinners with fear. Yet the pious do not hate the word. They think of it often. They love to think of it.

But what is eternity? It is a sea which has no shore, a race that is never all run, a river that has no spring and no mouth, yet always flows. It is the life-time of God, who was and is, and is to come. "He inhabits eternity." It is for ever and ever. It is duration without a bound. None but God fully knows what it is. We know it is not time told by hours, days, months, years, and ages. We speak of an eternity past and of an eternity to come. Yet there are not two. But we so speak, because we are at a loss for words. We go back, back, back, until our minds tire, but we come not to any point where eternity began. We go on, on, on, until we can go no further, and yet there is no end.

I was once in a school for the blind. The teacher gave this sum to one of the boys. He was to work it out in his mind. "A pile of sand is ten feet high, ten feet wide, and seventy feet long. Each cubic inch contains ten thousand grains. A bird comes every thousand years and takes away one grain at a time. How long will it take to carry away all the sand?" The little blind boy soon gave the answer, which was, that it would take 120,960,000,000,000 years. What a long row of figures! It means one hundred and twenty trillions and nine hundred and sixty billions. Now put all the sand on the sea-shore into one heap, and let a bird take away one grain every thousand years till all is gone, and yet that would not be the end of eternity. Eternity has no end.

Some of the ancients tried to give some idea of eternity by drawing a circle. A circle has no end. In that it is like eternity. But in no other respect. We can measure all circles. But we cannot measure eternity. None but God knows what it is.

There are three kinds of beings. One kind lives in time only. This is true of

birds, and fishes, and beasts. They come into life in time. They die, and that is the last of them. Their end is in time.

Another kind comes into life in time, but shall live always. Such are angels and men, good and bad. Men's bodies may die, but shall live again. But their souls live on, and on, and on, for ever. Nor do angels ever cease to live. All angels and all men shall live as long as God lives.

The third kind of being is God, who always was, and always shall be. He had no beginning. He was before all worlds. He is both from everlasting and to everlasting. Man is not from everlasting, but he is to everlasting. Beasts, and birds, and fishes are neither from everlasting nor to everlasting. They belong to time only, and most of them to a very small part of it. Thus God is one by himself. There is none like him.

Time is very short. I have often thought that time was like the Isthmus of Panama, which is a narrow piece of land. On one side is the Pacific Ocean; and on the other is the Atlantic. Time is like that strip of

land. It lies between an eternity past and an eternity to come.

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,
Yet how insensible:
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to yon heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell.

Time is very short. It will soon all be gone. It is like a cloud, or a vapour, that vanishes away. It is a moment. It is a little moment. It is like a weaver's shuttle. It flies so fast you cannot see it. It is like a man riding post. It stops for nobody. The sun and moon once stood still, but time never stood still. The shadow on the sundial of Ahaz once went back fifteen degrees; but time never went back a second. Time will soon be all gone, and gone for ever. A mighty angel will stand upon the land and the sea, and lift his hand to heaven, and swear, that time shall be no more. Yet long before he shall do so, time to you and to me will be no more. Death is the end of time to men. You need not kill time. It will soon be gone without such folly. Some

sleep too much, some play too much, some spend their days in trifles. O what folly! A young man dying, heard the clock strike, and said: "O time, it is right thou shouldst strike thy murderer to the heart."

If man is to live for ever, how much is his soul worth? Who can tell? Man cannot. Angels cannot. None but God knows the worth of a soul. It is worth more than all the houses, and lands, and gold, and silver on earth. Yet how little do some think of their souls! I once heard a boy praying. And what do you think he prayed for? He asked God to damn his soul. He is dead, and if God heard his prayer, where is he now? To lose the soul is the worst thing that could come on any man. To save the soul is one of God's greatest works. It cost the death of Christ. The pains of hell and the joys of heaven will never end.

These things deeply concern us. We should thank God for telling us of them. Stars may fall, kings may be put down, wars may rage, the earth may shake, and we be none the better, and none the worse. But we must take care what we say, and do,

and think, and feel. For what a man sows in this world, that shall he reap in the next.

It is not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.

God has told us so. There is no doubt about it. Let us thank him for not letting us live in the dark on these great matters.

If this life is so short, and the next life is so long, we ought not to mind our pains and sorrows much. If God is our God, we shall soon cease to weep, or even sigh. There is no pain in heaven. We can bear almost any thing, if it will soon be over. Let us never be very sad at any thing, which will not make us sad in the next life. He who loves God, is God's son, and shall be heir of all things.

Those, who live in sin, and laugh at holy things, will not laugh long. They will soon weep and howl. They may get what they wish here. But their sad day will come. They have no God. They have no good hope through grace. O, that they would think of these things, and lay them to

heart! I fear some of them never will. But I wish they would.

All agree that it is a solemn thing to die. But I think it is a solemn thing to live. How wise and holy we ought to be! How we should watch and pray, fight against sin, and strive to live unto God! Soon we must all go to our long home, and come back no more! Are we ready? Have we made peace with God? Is Jesus Christ all our hope? Have our hearts been changed? Do we love to pray? Do we love to sing and speak God's praises? Do we love the Sabbath-day? Is God in all our thoughts? Do we hate all sin? Are we like Christ?

GOD WILL PUNISH SIN.

“My mind is my own, and I will think what I please; my tongue is my own, and I will say what I please; my hands are my own, and I will do what I please,” said one, who loved to live in sin. He was in two errors. 1. His mind, and tongue, and hands

were not his own. God made them, and owned them. God had a right to them all.

2. If they had been his own, he still had no right to do wrong with them. A cane may be mine, but that does not give me a right to strike other people with it. We owe much to ourselves. We owe more to the public. We owe all to God. He, who does not feel that this is so, and does not live by the law of God, commits sin. Sin is evil. It is the worst evil. God ought to punish it. God will punish it. I shall prove that he will punish it.

1. He can punish it if he chooses. He knows all sin, and what it deserves. He can find out every sinner. Find him out! He need not seek him at all. He always sees him, and holds him in his hand. Nothing is too hard for God. He cast the fallen angels into hell. He brought down Pharaoh and all his host in the Red sea. He holds the winds in his fist. He rules the world. He has all power. He is at no loss for might or means.

2. God is holy and just, and so he hates sin. Of course, then, he will punish it. He

is so set against sin, that he never did, and he never will forgive one sin, but at the cost of Christ's death. He says he hates sin, and we know he does, and so we know he will punish it.

3. He *says* he will punish it. These are some of the texts: "Their feet shall slide in due time:" "Be sure your sin will find you out:" "If ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins:" "I will punish the world for their evil." He says the same thing again and again in many ways. He says he will "rain snares, fire and brimstone" on the wicked. These are very awful words. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Some say, God is too good to punish sin. But if he is too good to punish it, I should think he would be too good to *say* that he will punish it. Besides, to punish sin is a great proof that God is good. All good men say it is right that he should do so. It is only bad men, who love sin, who say God ought not to punish the wicked.

4. God has punished sin. He sent a storm of fire and brimstone on the cities of

the plain, and in one day took away all those guilty people. At one time he drowned all mankind, except eight souls. He has sent the sword, and other curses, on many cities and nations. He has built that great prison called hell, as a place of punishment. The rich man, who lived without God in the world, was hardly dead, until "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Sin and sorrow go together. Some men, who live in sin, seem to go on smoothly. But they only *seem* to do so. They have stings of conscience. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." "A dreadful sound is in his ears." He is often afraid of his own shadow. He fears the dark. He fears death. Or if he has so hard a heart that he fears not here, God will deal with him in the next world. There "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." There all who make or love a lie shall have their part in the lake of fire.

5. Sin is so evil, that it ought to be punished. It is the worst thing in all the world. It is the cause of all other evils. It ruins man, and makes him as a beast. It

turned angels into devils. It brings the best things into contempt. It makes men hate God. It digs every grave. It makes every tear to flow. It puts up the wrong. It puts down the right. It is worse than all other evils, worse than war, famine, or the plague. It fills earth with sorrow, and hell with wailings.

If sin be so bad, then—1. We ought to watch and pray against it. We should take all care not to fall into any form of it. No man ever took too much heed not to sin. Some have been too much afraid of water, or of men, or of pain, or of death, but no man was ever too much afraid of sin. Our great danger is, that we neither dread nor hate it as we should. We may safely abhor it. We must cry to God to keep us from it.

2. We can tell whether a man, or a boy, or a book, or a girl, do us good or harm, if we can tell what they make us think of sin. "Fools make a mock at sin." Some mock at it in words, some in deeds, and some in books. Nor is it safe for us to be with such persons, nor to read such books.

3. How good was God to give us his Son! Were it not for Christ, sin would be the ruin of us all. Sin has two evils in it. There is a curse in it. This curse is awful. It is the curse of the holy God. But "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He bore the curse due for our sins in his own body on the tree. He bore the sin of many. How little do we think of him! Nothing so much makes a good man doubt whether he has a new heart, as his want of more love to Christ. I wonder men love him so little. His love in dying for us has no equal. I never have heard any thing like it. I once heard a plain man preach on the text, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish but have everlasting life." When he came to speak of God giving his *only begotten* Son, he said, there was once a city in a state of siege. And there was a famine in the city. The bread was all gone. A man and woman had nine children, and they thought they would all die. So the father and mother talked to each other,

and at last they agreed that it was better to take the life of one child, and cook and eat it, than to let all die. So the man said to his wife, Which child shall we kill? The wife said, she could never see the oldest one die, for he was the image of his father. The next child was a girl, who had often been sick. Towards her the hearts of her parents were very tender. You know

“The bird, that we nurse, is the bird that we love:”

And they could not kill her. So they went over the list of all the nine. But they could not find one which they were willing to see die, even to save the life of the rest. “Now,” said the preacher, “God had but one Son, and he loved him more than any father or mother ever loved a son, and yet he freely gave him up to die, not for his friends, but for his foes. O! here is love indeed.” The preacher said this in a tender manner. Many wept, but whether they turned from sin and loved Christ, I do not know. I hope some of them did. I know all of them ought to have done so. Don’t you think so?

The other thing in sin, is its spot. It puts a deep and red stain on our souls. Some people think that the stain of blood shed in murder on a floor will never wash out. Perhaps they are wrong. But all the tears that man can shed, and all the water in the world, will not wash out the stain of sin. It defiles the soul in the worst way. It is the only thing that makes a soul ugly. God has sent his Holy Spirit to cleanse our hearts by the blood of Jesus. That good Spirit is full of love. He has mercy on us, comes to us, calls us, and weans us from sin. There is none that can cleanse us but God's Spirit. We should think of these things daily, and ask God not to leave us. If he take his Holy Spirit from us, we shall be vile, and base, and filthy for ever.

SOME STRANGE THINGS.

A little boy asked me one day, what was the strangest thing I ever saw. I love to hear such questions from a child. So I

talked with him a while about many things, that were quite strange, and told him I did not know which was the most so.

But I have thought more on the matter, and I think I can now tell. I think man is the strangest of all things I ever saw. He has a body and a soul. They can live together, and the soul can live by itself. This body is very curious. It was made so. The human hand is the best engine I ever saw. With it a man can strike a blow, or throw a stone, or lift a weight. With it one can write, or sew, or knit, or cut, or hold on, or let go. He can climb up or down trees or ropes; he can saw, or hammer, or sweep, or rub, or scrape, or chop, or fire a gun, or drive a plane, or split a rock or a log. Our hands help us to walk and to ride. Indeed, I have never seen any thing that could be put to so many uses as the hand of man. There is his heart too. It beats all day, and all night, and all his life, while he eats, and while he sleeps. It beats just as well when he does not think of it as when he does. It drives the blood to the very ends of his fingers and toes, and draws it back again, and

makes it pure and good, and then drives it through the whole body again. Man's brain is very strange also. It is acted on by all that he sees, and hears, and smells, and tastes, and feels.

But his soul is yet more strange. It can think, reason, remember, imagine, love, hate, fear, hope, be glad and be sorry. It can hold vast stores of wisdom and truth. It can measure the distance from the earth to the sun. It has told the size of the sun and moon. It can make prose and poetry. It can love God, and be wise. It can hate him, and be a fool.

This body and soul are bound closely together, yet they are not alike. The body is gross. You can weigh it, and measure it, and divide it. It has parts. It is matter. But the soul is spirit. You cannot see it, or weigh it, or divide it. Yet the soul and body suit each other very well. The body cannot love the soul, because the body is but dust and ashes. But the soul loves the body. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." The soul and body cease to live together at death, but they will join each other at the last great day.

Nor is this all. The soul and body may part *any* moment. One man died laughing at a picture of an old woman which he had made. Some die of joy. Many die of grief. Some die from hard work, and many from hard study, and still more from hard drinking. Some are killed by sloth. Some die of wounds. Many die of disease. Some die young, and some die old. The sting of a bee, or the scratch of a pin may take life.

Our life contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one be gone;
Strange that a harp of thousand strings,
Should keep in tune so long.

I do not wonder that one said: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." Ps. cxxxix. 14.

But man is a sinner, a great sinner. He sins against God. He sins all the time. He even hates God. To hate an enemy is bad; to hate a friend is worse; but to hate God is worst of all. God is man's best friend. God has done more for each man, than all men have done for Him. If men do hate God, it must be, as the Bible says,

“without a cause.” If men die sinners, they will sin always. When men die, God says; “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” Men cannot be born again after they die. It is then too late to pray and turn to God.

And a very little thing may make us think it right to live in sin, because we love it. One bad book has ruined thousands. One bad boy has taught many others to lie, and steal, and cheat, and curse, and swear, and so live in sin, and die in sin, and be lost for ever. Sometimes a word seems to make men worse. Even a look has made a man bold in sin.

Besides, a thing once done can never be undone. We may repent of it, and cease to do it; and God in love for Christ’s sake may forgive it. But it cannot be undone. God will bring every secret thing into judgment, whether it be good or evil. Nor will a man’s being sorry for a thing always keep it from doing harm. Many have taught vice to others, and been sorry for it. But the change in the teacher did not reform the taught.

Bad men wax worse and worse every day. As long as sin lives in us, it grows stronger. We may begin with a little, but if God lets us alone, we will surely go from bad to worse. The worse men are, the more apt they are to think well of themselves. They are made blind, and dull, and stupid, by sin. All wicked persons are nigh unto hell, and their end is to be burned. Yet see how they shut their eyes, and go on, even when warned. How stupid men are, more so than an ox or an ass. For "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but my people doth not know, Israel doth not consider." "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people," says God, "know not the judgment of the Lord."

The brutes obey their God,
And bow their necks to men;
But we more base, more brutish things,
Reject his easy reign.

We are strange creatures. We love not the most lovely things. We hate not the

most hateful things. We fear not the most fearful things. Nor are we won by the most winning things. God commands, but we obey not. He calls, but we hearken not. He threatens, but we tremble not. He invites, but we go not. He offers life, and we refuse it. He points us to Jesus, and we turn away from him. He says, "Why will ye die?" And we can give no good reason, but we go on in sin. He shows us hell, and begs us to avoid it, but we rush madly on. Is it not strange that the wicked love death, hate their own souls, flee from mercy, and dig into hell? Man cannot save himself. None but Christ can save him. But man can and does destroy himself. Man cannot raise himself to heaven, but he can work his way to hell. There is something in sin which I cannot explain. It is strange. It is folly. It is madness. It hurts none so much as him who commits it. It is the only thing that ever does much hurt any man. Yet sinners love it, nurse it in their hearts, and will not let it go. If any boy ever asks me again, what is the strangest thing I ever saw, I mean to tell him that I think the man who

lives in sin, when he knows better, is the strangest of all things I ever saw. But I hope that you, who read this book, will not live in sin one hour more. It is time to quit it. Yes, it is high time to forsake sin. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." He is very near now, but soon he may leave you. And if you die in sin, he will always be so far off, that he will not hear you any more. I wish you would pray to him with all your heart. If you would, he would hear and save you. If you are old enough to know what you are reading, you are old enough to come to Christ. He is waiting to be gracious to you. He says, "I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me." Kind Saviour, draw men, draw us to thee; make us willing in the day of thy power. He says, "My son, give me thy heart." You ought to give him your heart. No one is so worthy of it. No one has been so kind to you as he has. He is God's dear Son, and man's great Saviour. Will you love him?

You cannot love him, if you love sin. You cannot love him without a new heart.

How just it will be in God to send away from the light of his face all who hate him. He will send away none else. He is able to save, and he will save all who now come to him through Jesus Christ. But he will save none others. He is a holy God, and he hates all sin. He never was pleased, and he never will be pleased, with sinners.

Think, too, he may call you to his bar any day. You have no lease for your life. You cannot tell what an hour may bring forth. This may be your last day on earth. What you do, do quickly. Be in earnest. Flee for your life. Look not behind you. Tarry not an hour. Remember Lot's wife. Go now to Christ. Say.

I can but perish if I go ;
I am resolved to try,
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die.

Yes, if you stay away, you must for ever die. There is no doubt about it. O come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.

SOMETHING STILL STRANGER.

THERE are strange things told every where. Strange sights may be seen in every city and country. Man is the strangest being I ever *saw*. But God is the greatest wonder I ever *heard of*. I have told you a little of him. But the greatest wonder in God is his love to sinners, at least it seems so to me. The Apostle John saw many miracles on earth, and wonders in heaven, yet he says: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!" I do not wonder that, when speaking on such a subject, he said, "Behold!" He adds that, so great is this love, that "the world knoweth us not." If God loved us so as to make us poets, orators, generals, or kings, the world would know us. It knew Homer, and Cicero, and Cæsar, and Bonaparte, in all their greatness. But it "knows not the sons of God." The reason is because it "knows not God," who loves sinners so as to make sons of them.

I once heard a man in the pulpit say, that

he did not know which were the greatest, our sins, or God's mercies. It seems to me he did not know much. He was hardly fit to preach, or he would not have said that. Our sins are very great. They are far greater than any man ever saw them to be. But if God's mercies had not been greater than our sins, we should all now be in hell. That is certain. Our sins rise like the mountains towards heaven. But God's mercies are above the heavens. Our sins are the acts of worms. His mercies are the mercies of a God. We are less than the least of all his mercies. Man is vile, but "God is love."

When the Lord Jesus, who is "the express image" of God, was upon earth, he said and did many things to let men see that he loved them, and that God loved them, even if they had sinned much. I cannot tell you all that he said and did to this end. I will just give you a few verses from the 7th chapter of Luke. "And one of the Pharisees desired Jesus that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew

that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now, when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet

with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

I think this is one of the sweetest parts of all the Bible. It suits my case so well. Does it not suit you? I would rather feel like this poor woman than have all the good works of all the men who ever lived, as a ground of my hope in God. I had a friend who loved Christ, and not long before he died, he told them how to bury him, and what to put on his grave stone. Besides his name and age there were these words, "A sinner saved by grace." I like that very much. To be saved by grace is not merely the *only* way, but it is also the *best* way for us to be saved. It suits us exactly.

The business of Christ is with sinners.

He receives such. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." He was "full of grace," as well as "of truth." He never has rejected any sinner that came to him humbly. Yet he is no more loving than the Father or the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to make the Father love us. No: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The Holy Spirit too is tender, and gentle, and loving. When he came down upon Christ at his baptism, it was like a dove. And you know the dove is the very gentlest of all creatures. So that the love and mercy shown to sinners is from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We feel a nearness to Christ because he took our nature on him. But all the persons of the Godhead love and pity sinners. Let me tell you some of the fruits of God's love.

1. The Father gave the Son. There never was such a Father. There never was such a Son. There never was such a gift made even by God.

2. The Son gave his face to smiting and spitting, his head to a crown of thorns, his

body to the cross, and his soul a sacrifice for sins. He wept, and bled, and died, not for himself, but for us enemies.

3. The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, calls us, renews us, works in us faith, and love, and hope, and joy, and peace, and repentance.

4. Out of love God pardons millions of sinners. He forgives many, many sins in all who are saved. He does all this freely, "without money and without price." He has pardoned more men, and forgiven in each of them more and greater sins, than all men ever did.

5. Out of mere mercy he gives to men new hearts, and he keeps them from the evil that is in the world. He guides them, cheers them, makes them patient in sorrows, and happy in death.

6. Of his mere love, he gives heaven for a home to all that love him. I do not know much about heaven. No man does. But there is nothing in it that would give pain, and there is in it all that would give pleasure to one who had a holy heart. "The Lamb is the light thereof." Heaven is full of joy,

full of songs of praise, full of glory. There are many there who died before they were half as old as you. If you should die to-day, are you fit to go there? Have you got a new heart? Do you love Christ? Do you love all the commandments? Do you love the Sabbath? Do you love your enemies? Christ loved his foes and died for them. There never was such a friend as Jesus Christ. I wish all loved him. There never was such love as the love of God to men. I have seen a beautiful hymn about God's love. You may never have seen it. So I will put it in. I wish you would learn it, and learn to sing it. Here it is.

Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every longing heart.

Breathe, O! breathe thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find thy promised rest:

Take away the love of sinning,
Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive,
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thine hosts above;
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy precious love.

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure, unspotted may we be:
Let us see our whole salvation
Perfectly secured by thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

A PAIN IN THE HEAD.

I love to be with good and happy children.
It makes my old heart glad to see them
merry. I love to read of them too. I shall
always be glad that I have read of some

good children. I like the way the Bible speaks of children. There was little Moses in the basket in the river. How God took care of him! There was Samuel with his little new coat, which his mother made for him every year. There was Timothy too, getting his lesson in the Bible, with his mother and grandmother to help him.

One story in the Bible I always did like, although it is about a child that died. It is this: "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall: and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi, his servant, Call this Shunammite.

And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily, she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood at the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my Lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thy handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life. And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head! my head! And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and

laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee. So she went, and came unto the man of God to Mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite. Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet; but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she

said, Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and

stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out." 2 Kings iv. 8-37.

I think this is a very good story. It is very well told. I could not tell it so well if I were to try a week. It is very fine. I will tell you some of my thoughts about it.

1. We all ought to be glad to have good men come to see us at our own houses. Here was a "great woman," but she was glad to have the man of God with her. All great folks are not wicked, though it does spoil many to be great. It makes them proud, and pride is a great sin. This woman and her husband too loved to have Elisha there. Children should be glad to have good people come to see them. Those who love God, love children, and will pray for them.

2. People ought not to make much ado when God's ministers come to see them.

This woman gave the man of God a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. She gave him what he needed, but she did not show off her pretty things. Elisha did not wish to see her finery, and she did not care to show it.

3. Nobody ever did a kind thing to a good man, but God took notice of it and was pleased with it. God gave this woman a child for her goodness to his servant. Even a cup of cold water shall meet with a reward.

4. But a child may be *sick*. Even a child that is given by God to us for our kindness to his people, may be sick. This woman's child was sick. It is said here that he "was grown." But it does not mean that he was grown to be a man, but that he was grown enough to go to the field. He was a child, and he was sick. Have not you been sick? Did you never see a sick child? I have seen many. Some are sick in the head, some in the heart, some with fever, and some in other ways. This little boy cried, "My head! my head!" He had a dreadful pain in the head.

5. A child may be *very* sick. This one

was. It may be that you have been so sick that you could not sit up.

6. A child of *pious parents* may be very sick. Piety will keep us from all pain in the next world, but not in this. God sends pain on the best men in this world to make them fit for heaven.

7. A child may *die*. I have seen some die. I have seen more after they were dead. Very many die young. Half that are born into this world, are said to die before they are seven years old. They may be very dear to their parents, as this child was to his, but still they may die. Death has reigned even over infants ever since Adam fell.

8. A child may die *suddenly*. This boy was well in the morning when he went into the field. But at noon of the same day he was dead. It is a sad day when even a child dies. It fills a whole family with sorrow. The mother of this boy was sad, but she did not scream and howl as some do. She acted right. Yet the stroke was heavy. The death was very sudden.

9. She had faith in God, and went to the

man of God. But she did not say any foolish thing. She argued, she pleaded, she gained her point. God, who gave her the child at first, brought him to life again. God kills and makes alive.

You too may be sick. If you should be, do not fret and be cross. Be sweet. Take your medicine when it is given you. Be patient. Do not make the worst of every thing. Be thankful to God for what is still left you. You have a good doctor, a good nurse, a good bed, and many good things. Do not scold at servants when they are doing their best. To be sick is a bad thing. But to be sick and cross too, is still worse. When sick, as when well, pray to God. Ask others to pray for you. If you can, read or hear some of the word of God. Give your heart to Christ. Ask him to give you a new heart. Pray God to make you what you ought to be. Ask him to help you to say, "Not my will, but thine be done, O God." If you have been sick, but are now well, do not soon forget it. Thank God for all the health you have. Live to his honour.

You may die, and that very soon. I do

not know that you will, but I am sure you may. Are you ready? Have you made peace with God? Have you taken Jesus Christ for all and in all? Have you been born again? No one can be saved without a change of heart. It is a dreadful thing to die in sin. Even if you love God, you may die, but then you will go to heaven. There are many in heaven younger than you are.

Babes thither caught from womb and breast,
Claim right to sing above the rest,
Because they found the happy shore,
They never saw nor sought before.

If babes may be saved, so may you. You are old enough to seek God. You ought to seek him now. Then, if you die, you will be saved.



A CHAPTER OF SAYINGS.

EVEN a child is known by his doings.

Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king.

Childhood and youth are vanity.

Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The flower of youth is never so beautiful as when, like the heliotrope, it bends and bows its head to the Sun of Righteousness.

Bad boys bid fair to be bad men.

He, who loves danger, shall perish therein.

A clear conscience is the best defence.

He, that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Very few know when and how to say, Yes, and No.

Tell me with whom you go, and I will tell you who you are.

A liar ought to have a good memory.

Love not sleep lest thou come to poverty.

Reading makes a learned man, writing a correct man, speaking a ready man, and thinking a great man.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.

A fool will utter all his mind.

We have two eyes and two ears, but only one tongue. See and hear much, and speak little.

We have two hands and two feet, but only one soul. Then take care of that.

A wise son maketh a glad father.

It is as sport to a fool to do mischief.

He, who hates his book, loves the rod.

He, who hates his brother, is a murderer.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Leave off strife before you begin it.

He, who seeks revenge, keeps his wounds always bleeding.

Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Pride leads to prison.

Great men have little to hope for, and much to fear.

There is no man that sinneth not.

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

Never set the house on fire, that you may roast an egg.

Let not thy heart envy sinners.

He, who does as well as he knows how, will know more.

Those, who are fond of strong drink, love red eyes.

Bats, owls, and evil thoughts, love the twilight.

To be without a new heart, is to hate God.

It would be better not to be born, than not to be born again.

He who does not love truth, will soon not know it.

The heaven of heavens cannot contain God.

No man knows how deep the sea is.

All human faces are alike, or we could not tell a man from a brute.

No two faces are quite alike, or we could not tell one from another.

No one wants snow in summer.

There is a time for all things.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.

He, that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

As a dog who has no master, so is a man who has no wisdom.

A penny saved is two-pence gained.

Abhor that which is evil.

Cleave to that which is good.

Seekest thou great things? Seek them not.

A life of ease is a life of sin.

Hunger is the best sauce, and labour makes all meats good.

He, who never unbends his bow, will not be able to shoot well.

What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

No man sinks to the lowest vices in a day.

He, who lies down wise, will not awake a fool.

Every narrow way is not the way to heaven.

Some men are poor here, and poorer hereafter.

Cowards are commonly cruel.

The man who shall be President of the United States in the year 1899, is now probably a poor boy, struggling with hardships, but mastering them.

Great men are not always wise.

No one was ever a loser by doing his duty to his parents.

A good name is better than great riches.

Two green sticks and a dry one will make a fire.

To love one's self more than God, is the sin of all who have not been born again.

The ox knows his owner. Do you know yours?

Those who are vain of fine dress are trying to be peacocks.

Seek the Lord while he may be found.

Cunning is crooked wisdom.

A cock is better pleased with a grain of corn than a gem.

Some seem so good that they are good for nothing.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Envy has no holidays.

Thorns and briers prick and scratch, because that is all they can do.

He who tells lies is brave towards God, and a coward towards men.

Many friends are like rats who forsake a sinking ship.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

More men worship the rising than the setting sun.

He, who has a friend, bears only half his own griefs.

Wounds cannot be cured without searching.

To say all is well is easy; to make all well is hard.

A life of piety is the only truly happy life.

It never troubles a wolf how many sheep there are.

Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

As a dove among hawks, so is a good child among the bad.

Possess your souls in patience.

There is no worse disease than bone in the heart.

God does most for kings; but kings do least for God.

The power of thought chiefly points out a man from a brute.

The habit of thought chiefly points out a wise man from a fool.

Those who are men at twelve, will ever after be boys.

He, who lives to learn, will learn to live.

The more you feed a calf, the bigger calf it is.

Seek first the kingdom of God.

An idle boy will make a mean old man.

If you cannot trust your mother, it is madness to trust any one else.

The kite cannot fly up except as it is held down.

He, that is down, needs fear no fall.

There is a bottom to every pit but the pit of woe.

Heaven is no hive for drones.

Hell is the truth seen too late.

He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

A good conscience is good company.

He is a free man who serves God.

THEY WERE BOTH WRONG.

JOHN was a poor boy. He seldom had any money. Sometimes he did not have a cent for a year. He one day met Charles, who had a knife. It was not worth much, but Charles praised it a great deal. At last he said, "John, you may have this knife for twelve and a half cents. You may pay me when you can. I will wait three months with you." John thought three months was a long time, and so he took the knife. But he got no money in three months, nor in four. Charles often asked him to pay, but John always said he had no money. This was true. But John did not say it in a very pleasant way. One day Charles said, "You must pay me." John said, "I cannot," and then added a few words as if he might never pay. Charles was strong and threw John down, and beat him, and tore his coat. John then said he would pay soon. But he had no money, and no way of getting any. And Charles would not take back the knife. So they had a fight when-

ever they met, and John would make a new promise. After a long time, John got the money and paid it. Then he and Charles did not fight any more, but were good friends. Now I will tell you what I think of this matter.

1. I think Charles did wrong in praising his own knife so much. He made it seem a great thing in John's eyes. He did not tell any very great lie about it, but he said too much in praise of it.

2. Charles did wrong in selling it to John, when he knew John was poor, and hardly had any way of getting money. He knew he would get John into trouble. He was older than John, and ought not to have led him into the bargain.

3. Charles did wrong in not taking back the knife, when it was all John had to give. 'Twas not kind in him to refuse it. I think he had not learned those pretty lines:

“What mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.”

Christ said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” God has said,

“He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.” It is very wrong to urge people to buy things, and then to vex them for not paying us.

4. Charles did wrong in fighting John about it. He was strong, and fought him hard. Even little boys hurt each other when they fight. It is very wicked to put boys to fighting. We should all try to do good and not harm to each other.

“But man, whose heaven-erected face,
The smiles of love adorn;
Man’s inhumanity to man,
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

To be hard with one who owes us is very wicked. How could such an one pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors?” Jesus Christ said, “Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. And when he began to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The ser-

vant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I have had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly

Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matt. xviii. 23-35.

But John was to blame too.

1. He ought not to have bought the knife. He did not really need it. Any thing is dear to us at any price if we do not need it. John had no right to take Charles's knife without seeing some clear way of paying for it. It is not honest to buy, unless we know at the time how we can pay. When Charles praised the knife, John should have said, "I have no money, and no way of getting it that I know of. I will not take it." "Owe no man any thing." "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." Pay-day and the day of death will be sure to come.

2. When Charles urged John to pay, John should not have used rough words. He should have been mild and kind. He should not have spoken as if he meant never to pay. "Once a debt always a debt till it is paid," is a good rule.

3. John ought not to have made so many promises when he knew not whether he could

keep them. It was a kind of lying. Every kind of lie defiles the conscience, and displeases God.

But both the boys did right in being good friends after the thing was settled. John did not hate Charles, and Charles never cast it up to John that he was poor, or had not paid him sooner. It is very bad to bear grudges. To fight is very bad. But to bear old hatred is even worse. John and Charles are old men now, and have large families, but they have been very friendly ever since. But Charles has never become a Christian. He loves money very much. It seems to grow on him. "The love of money is the root of all evil." I fear it will be so with many. If you love money you cannot love God. The Bible says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." John is very much a man of his word. He is very careful not to make any more foolish bargains. I hope he loves God. He reads the Bible, and prays with his family. He keeps his word now, but he is very careful how he makes promises.

THE RIBBON ROOM.

KATY'S mother was sickly, but she was pious, and brought up her children well. Katy was a good child, and loved her mother, and did all she could to help her. . Katy was a great hand at sweeping the house, and putting things nice. When she was about eleven years old, a man came to her father's with some trunks full of ribbons. There he got a room, put up some shelves, and opened his ribbons. He wished to sell them to the people of the town. He kept the room open four or five hours every day. He got Katy to dust and sweep the room for him, and told her he would pay her for it. He knew she was a good girl, and he gave her the key to go in alone. But one day after she had swept the room and made all nice, she stopped a moment to look at the things. All at once the ribbons looked so pretty; she thought she had never seen any thing so fine before. One bolt of ribbon after another filled her eye. At last Satan put the thought into her mind, to take some of them. She looked for a

moment longer, and thought of these words, "Thou shalt not steal." She was full of fear, fled from the room, locked the door, went alone and thanked God for not letting her steal. She also asked God to keep her in all time to come. She did not tell any one of this great trial till she was an old lady. But after that day, she always got her mother to go with her into the ribbon room, when she went to fix it. If she had stolen, it would no doubt have been found out. People would always have called her thief. They would not have thought of her age, nor the charms which ribbons have to a little child.

But what could she have done with them, if she had taken them? She could not have worn them, for that would have been to tell she was a thief. Nor could she have sold them, or given them away, for then people would have asked, Where did you get them? She could not have hid them, for her mother no doubt often looked into her drawers. Thieves often steal what they have no use for. I have known them to steal old iron. They have more trouble in hiding stolen things, than they are worth. But the worst

thing in stealing, is that it is wicked. God hates all theft. He never can love those who love the price of sin. Thieves and liars, if they do not repent and turn to God, must all perish. Hell is a dreadful place. All the vile will be there. There is no place in this world as bad as hell is. There God pours the vials of his wrath on the wicked, and they weep, and howl, and gnash their teeth always.

I wish here to say a few things more.

1. It is not right to put a child in any place where it will be too much tried. People may think a child better than it is. We are all poor creatures, and easily fall into sin. Both the mind and principles of a child are weak. If he does not fall into sin, he may still suffer a great deal in his mind.

2. Children should learn to pray. Who, more than a child, needs to cry daily, "Lead us not into temptation?" Every child should offer that prayer every day. God alone can keep any one from doing the worst things. Do you ask God to keep you? He alone is able to do it.

3. When tempted, let us try to find a way

of escape. Katy fled from danger, and Satan fled from her. It was when Eve "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, that she took of the fruit and did eat." Never look at things forbidden. Never listen to things forbidden. Never smell things forbidden. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," is the Bible rule.

4. Katy was right in thanking God for not letting her steal. If we have been kept from doing the worst things, we have been kept by God. If he be not a wall of fire round about us, we shall surely fall. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

5. It is always best to do right. It gives us pleasure as often as we think of it. It gives us such peace of mind. If you can always do right, you need not fear. God will take care of you. He took care of Katy. When the man paid her, she felt she had a right to the money. She was always glad that she had been able to do right.

THE LOST POCKET-BOOK.

RICHARD and Francis were born in New England, but their parents went to live in the far West. There they kept up their good ways. They did not forget God. They read his word, kept his Sabbaths, and prayed night and morning. Both these parents did all they could to teach their boys the ways of God.

One day the boys were coming from school, and met two men riding. The boys stopped and made a polite bow to the strangers. One of the men said a kind word to them. The other said, "Did you get whipped to-day?" and then he laughed. Richard said nothing because he saw the man was rude. But Francis said, "No, sir;" so they passed on. The boys had not gone far till they found some papers and an open pocket-book in the road. They took them up, and soon were at home. They told their mother all that had passed. She looked at the papers, and saw that one name was on them all. She also saw in the pocket-book two rolls of

money. Just then her husband came in. He counted the money and found it to be near two hundred dollars. He heard all the facts in the case, and said he was sorry any one had lost the money. Francis said, "the man who lost it must feel very badly."

Just then a man was going by. By him word was sent that some money had been found. He told it to all, along the road. About dark, he came to a tavern, where the two men, who had met the boys, had stopped. He there told of the money. Soon the man, who had spoken rudely to the boys, said, "I have lost my money, and papers, and pocket-book. And I was just going to pay for my land."

He was about to start back; but it was dark, and they told him his money was safe at that house. So he went to bed, but did not sleep much. He was up very early, and set off to go back eight miles. He got there soon after the sun rose, and told his errand. He also told his name, and said what money and papers he had lost. So it was clear that he was the owner, and all was promptly given to him. He was very glad.

He then said he would pay them for finding and keeping it, and held out ten dollars to the father of the boys. But he would not have it. He then offered five dollars to each of the boys. This was much money for them. But they would not have it. At this the man looked as if he were hurt, and said, "This is very strange." But the father said, "We have only done our duty. We are poor, but we cannot lose our good name." "Then," said the man, "I have done very wrong. I spoke rudely to your boys, when I met them yesterday. I am very sorry." He seemed to feel what he said.

In a few minutes he left the house. He told every one how well he had been treated. He said those boys would not come to a bad end, and that he never saw such people. This is my story.

Now, I hope you will make up your mind to these things, viz:

1. Never be rude to any one, not even to a little boy, or a stranger. Treat every one kindly. You may soon need their good will.

2. If you ever find any thing, give early

notice of it. Let the owner know where he can get it, if he will prove that it is his. If you know who he is, send him word. If you do not know who he is, give notice to all the public. And restore it without reward.

EDWIN AND HIS TEACHER.

EDWIN was not a very bad boy. He was not easily made angry. He would bear a great deal sometimes. He loved to laugh. With some of his playmates he never had a cross word. Yet he was in no wise better than he ought to have been. In some things he came far short. When he saw one wrong him, and take no step towards doing him justice, his heart was not meek. It was, in truth, frightful to see him angry. I once saw him, when I thought he would have killed a boy. I still think he would, had not one caught his arm. He was about to strike with the heavy leg of a bench. Yet he was almost always very friendly. The boys loved him. He would give away his last apple or almond. He was smart and gay, and full of life. Some

of his teachers still live to praise him. But one of his teachers, who is now dead, did not like him. He was a good scholar, and made some good scholars. But he was passionate and cruel. He would both praise and punish without reason. He belonged to one church, and Edwin's parents to another. This, it was thought, made him not feel so kindly to Edwin. His temper was quick. He loved and hated without cause. He would often fret. He would whip in spite. I have heard him praise the bad as much as the good. He was a member of a church, and at times very zealous. It is no part of my business to judge him. He was not my servant. But he had some ugly ways. I have seen some men, who seemed to have grace enough for two common men, but not half enough for themselves. Even when this teacher did right, he often did it in an ugly way. He did not seem to think of those words of Scripture, "Let not your good be evil spoken of." His prayers were long and loud. Yet he may have been a truly good man.

When he found fault, it was in harsh words. He was not kind and gentle. When he chided,

he railed and stormed. Yet I have often thought he was sorry for these things. Perhaps he was. God knows. He was often rough towards Edwin. He would laugh at him and hurt his feelings. He struck him three or four times very hard, and for no good cause. Once he whipped him cruelly. Edwin was manly, and did not easily weep. This made his teacher seem to dislike him. At least we thought so. For a while Edwin carried him apples, but at last he brought no more. Yet he did not tell his parents about the way he was treated, until the school was broken up.

At the end of three months, the teacher went away from that place to one nearly a hundred miles off. Edwin and many others were glad he was gone. He may have done better there. I hope he did. Edwin still thought of him, but he did not forgive him. He hated not only his ways, but his person too. He that hates another is a murderer. Edwin ought to have let it pass away from his mind. He had a spite against his old teacher. But what could he do? He was but a child, and the man was far away. His thoughts were

busy. At last he said to himself: "I will write him a letter, tell him that I am his friend, and that there are bad stories about him, and that he must come and see about them; but I will not put my own name to it, and I will date it at the place where my teacher lived some years ago." So he wrote the letter in his best hand, and spelt every word as well as if he had been a man. He put it in a cover, and directed it to the postmaster of the town where it was dated, asking him to forward it. But he was not easy when he was doing all this. His heart smote him. He trembled as he went to the post-office. As soon as he dropped the letter into the box, he ran till he got around the corner. Of course he did not pay the postage. He had hardly done this, when he wished he had not done it. He was afraid he would be found out.

His fears were just. His old teacher knew his hand. For some cause he had kept a copy-book of each of his scholars. He thus and from memory knew Edwin's writing. The letter and cover, and all were sent to a friend of the teacher living where Edwin lived. The teacher told his friend who had written it, as

he thought. This friend told Edwin, and showed him the letter. Edwin could not deny his guilt. He was in a world of troubles. He did not know what the law was, and feared he might be put in jail. Shame and fear both held him back from telling his father, so as to get good advice. He now began to reap the fruit of his sin. He did not sleep well. He had bad dreams. He could not fix his mind on his book. He did not seem to care for his food. He was too proud yet to pray about it. At one time he told the man who had the letter, that he had sent it just out of fun. But when asked wherein was the fun, he could not tell. Edwin once said he loved his old teacher very much, but that was not so, and he knew it. When asked about the bad rumours at the town where the letter was dated, he had to say, that he knew none, and had heard none.

At last the man who had the letter said: "You are but a child." (Edwin was not yet eleven years old.) "I hope you are sorry for what you have done. I will not tell any one, if you will do better. I will stop the matter here." The tears came in Edwin's

eyes, and he thanked the man. He also said he would never do such a thing again. I think he has kept his word. Edwin seldom had much money, but he had *fifty* cents at this time, and he laid that down saying, "this will pay all the postages." The man said, "I do not want it." But Edwin said, "You must keep it;" and he went away, leaving it on the table. It just paid the whole amount, including one letter yet to be written.

Edwin now began to feel better. He was serious, but he was happy. He saw this bad affair brought to an end. And he had done right in paying the money which others had paid for his wrong. Postage was then more than double what it is now. I will now tell you what I think of these things. I will speak first of the teacher.

1. Whether he was a good man, I do not know. It is a sad thing that some men seem good one hour, and bad the next. Our business is not to judge them, but to take good heed not to be like them.

2. Those are poor members of any church of Christ, who have bad feelings to members

of other churches. It is sad to see how a mere name sways some people. I should not like to be found hating any good man of any name, or of no name.

3. This man was not fit to be a teacher. He had not rule enough over himself to fit him to rule others. He showed partiality also. The people did right in keeping him but one quarter.

But I must say much about Edwin.

1. Though he had some very good traits, yet he had some great faults. He was commonly frank and open, yet you have seen how sly and cunning he tried to be. He was generous, and yet he was spiteful. He bore malice for a long time, at least in this one case. He was commonly friendly, but it was a wonder that he did not kill a boy, when he was not ten years old. I do not mean to say that all anger is sinful. The Bible says, "Be ye angry and sin not." But it also says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Many suns went down on Edwin's anger against his teacher. He sinned there. Christ said: "That whosoever is angry with his brother without a

cause shall be in danger of the judgment." God is often said to be "slow to anger." Let us try to be like him. "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools," not of the wise. "An angry man stirreth up strife."

2. God is very good in holding us back from great sins. If Edwin had killed that boy, how great a sin it would have been! How his conscience would have tormented him for life! He never would have got over it. God is good to us all in the way of restraint. We should think of this and be humbled. Our hearts are very vile.

3. Edwin sinned in sending the letter. He had no right to make his old teacher pay postage on that letter. If he had had any right feelings, he would have paid the postage at first. Christ says, "He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Every one knows that no man would be willing to pay money for letters, if he knew that they had no name to them. Again, writing a letter at one place, and dating it at another, was writing a known falsehood. Is any thing likely to end well, which begins with an untruth? In the letter he said, "I

am your friend." That was not true, and he knew it. He also told him that bad stories were told of him in a place where he did not know that any thing was said of him. Here was another lie. After he was found out, he said he did it in fun. This was not true. This was a very bad affair from first to last.

4. People cannot sin and pray both. They may sin and keep up a form of prayer. But they cannot sin with the heart and pray with the heart too. Edwin found it so. Even in his trouble he could not pray.

5. I hope all who read this story, will now settle it in their minds that they will never write any letter without putting their own name to it. I think it is a sin to do so. It may wound one who is already in deep sorrow. It may make him suspect those who are not guilty. It cuts him off from all fair chance to defend himself. It may give him much trouble for no good. It is a mean and cowardly thing. If there is any attempt in it to deceive, it is a great sin. Never write an anonymous letter.

6. Edwin did right in paying the *fifty*

cents. It was due to others. He had at times a strong sense of honour. When he acted it out he did right. He always felt best when he did as honour required. We all ought to pay, as far as we are able, every cent that any body loses by our doing wrong. "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; but if he be found, he shall restore seven-fold; he shall give all the substance of his house." Prov. vi. 30, 31. As soon as Zaccheus loved Christ, he began to restore money to those whom he had cheated. We must do the same as far as we can.

7. Unless we repent and obtain pardon by the blood of Jesus, all our sins will meet us at the last day, just as Edwin's letter met him, when he did not wish to see it. Edwin could not deny his guilt. Neither will we be able to deny ours, if we die in sin. "Be sure your sin will find you out." "Every mouth will be stopped, and all the world will become guilty before God." The last day will be a great day indeed.

8. It is well always to have this truth before our minds: "THOU, GOD, SEEST ME."

It would save us from many a sinful act and word. I knew a minister once who had these words in large letters hanging over his mantel. Whether you hang them up on a card or not, try to keep them in mind.

ACORNS MAKE OAKS.

EVERY thing has a nature. Oaks do not grow from chestnuts. They spring only from acorns. Neither corn nor barley ever grow from the seed of wheat. Grapes never grow on thorns. Thistles never bear figs. God, angels, men, children, all have natures.

But this is not all. A kitten will be a cat; a lamb will be a sheep; and a puppy will be a dog, if they each live long enough. This is quite plain. John Bunyan has written an account of "the life and death of Mr. Badman." And he says, that "from a child he was very bad." Bad boys are not apt to make good men. Good boys are not apt to make bad men. Boys sometimes seem to be good for a while, but you do not know their

hearts and deeds, or you would not call them good. When they grow up, and all at once seem to turn out badly, you may be sure that is not the first time they have been in great sin. A lady in Hartford, Connecticut, has written much pretty poetry and prose too. Her name is Mrs. Sigourney. She has told the world about "the boy that became a traitor." She says: "There are few things more disgraceful in children, than to be cruel to those harmless creatures, which are not able to defend themselves. If I see a child pull off the wings of an insect, or throw stones at a toad, or take pains to set his foot upon a worm—I am sure there is something wrong about him, or that he has not been well instructed. There was once a boy that loved to give pain to every thing that came in his way, over which he could get any power. He would take the eggs from the mourning robin, and torture the unfledged sparrow. Cats and dogs, the peaceable cow, and the faithful horse, he delighted to worry and distress. I do not like to tell you of the many cruel things that he did. He was told that such deeds were wrong. An excellent lady,

with whom he used to live, used to warn and reprove him for his evil conduct. But he did not reform. When he grew up, he became a soldier. He was never sorry to see men wounded, and blood running upon the earth. He became so wicked as to lay a plan to betray his country, and sell it into the hands of the enemy. This is to be a traitor. But he was discovered and fled. He never dared to return to his native land, but lived despised, and died miserably in a foreign clime. Such was the end of the cruel boy, who loved to give pain to animals. His name was Benedict Arnold. He was born at Norwich, in Connecticut, and the beautiful city of his birth is ashamed of his memory."

Bad boys will be very apt to make bad men, for the very reason that acorns make oaks. That is, nature will show itself, and grow stronger and stronger. Even the grace of God in the heart does not make a bad tree bring forth good fruit. That is not the way that grace works. No; it makes the tree good, and then the fruit is good also. It puts the heart right, and then the thoughts, and words, and deeds are right also. This

is God's way. When a watch does not keep good time, men do not try to make it run well by putting the hands back or forward. They try to get all things right within. Then the hands go well of course.

Perhaps there hardly ever was a worse man than the Roman emperor, Domitian. He delighted in seeing others suffer. He was one of the most cruel foes the early Christians had. How did he become so vile? By killing flies with a bodkin when he was young. When he got older, flies were not big enough for him. He wished to see men, and women, and children suffer. If you are a cruel boy, you will probably be a cruel man. If you are a pouting girl, you will be very apt to be a cross old woman. Take care what you *do*, but most of all, take heed what you *are*, when you are young.

THE END.





